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Google Home upgrade brings some of the best Sonos features to your speakers

GOOGLE HOME owners will now be able to use some of the greatest features from connected audio specialists Sonos on their voice-activated gadgets.

By AARON BROWN

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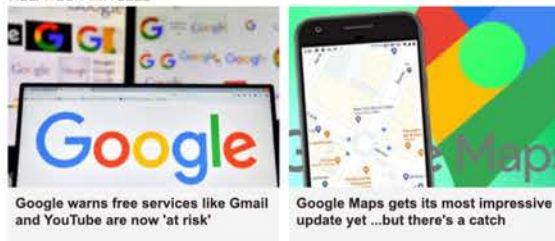
Google Home users can now quickly add or remove speakers to blast their favourite tracks (Image: GOOGLE - UNISPLASH)

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Google has started to roll out a number of new multi-room audio options for Google Nest speakers and smart displays controlled within the Google Home app. The new functionality appears to be the most direct challenge to the likes of Sonos, which has enjoyed enormous success by creating a series of connected speakers and soundbars that can play music simultaneously – or individually.

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In a blog post shared earlier this week, Google revealed its new dynamic speaker group options, which lets you add and remove speakers from the Google Home app with a few taps. Although you've been able to manually group together Google Assistant-enabled speakers, smart displays and Chromecasts for a while now, Google didn't offer the ability to quickly throw together a few devices on a whim.

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The upgraded multi-room control works inside a number of your favourite music apps, like Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube Music, and more. If the app already supports the ability to Cast your audio to a Google Assistant-enabled speaker or a Chromecast, then you'll be able to bundle a few speakers together to create a haphazard grouping. Tapping on the Cast icon in the corner of the screen when any audio content is playing will let you add or remove your other devices throughout your home.

If you have a Google Nest Hub, or another smart display, in your home, you don't even need to pull out your smartphone. Instead you'll be able to use a new interface included in the clever gadget to quickly tick or untick speakers on your network. Just like Sonos, you can also change the volume on each speaker individually from the main interface.

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As pictured above, the new interface lets you toggle speakers, Chromecasts, and smart displays (Image: GOOGLE)



Of course, if you find yourself adding the same speakers again and again, it might be worth putting in the time to create a dedicated group. That allows you to beam audio from these speakers with a single tap – or ask Google Assistant to do it for you.

Chris Chan, Product Manager for Google Nest, says coupling the new feature with stereo pairing for two Nest Mini or Home Max devices will bring left and right channel support and room-filling audio for your favourite track.

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The latest upgrade to Google Home audio gadgets comes after the Mountain View-based company introduced a new feature, dubbed Stream Transfer, that lets you move music, videos, podcasts and more between compatible devices in your home using your voice, the Google Home app or the touchscreen on your Nest smart display. So, you can be listening to a podcast in the kitchen while preparing dinner – and throw the episode to the speaker in your dining room to continue listening while you munch.

As Google Home becomes a more fully-fledged multi-room audio app, Sonos recently overhauled its entire app. The next-generation Sonos app includes support for high resolution

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audio including Dolby Atmos, as well as delivering new security updates. With the arrival of the new app, Sonos had to drop support for a number of connected speakers.

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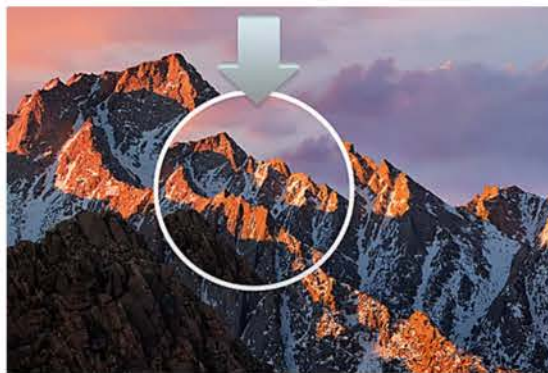
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